



American Youth
Policy Forum

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Alternative Education in ESSA State Plans: A Review of 38 States

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About the American Youth Policy Forum

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional development organization based in Washington, DC that provides learning opportunities for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working on education, youth, and workforce issues at the national, state, and local levels.

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Executive Summary

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides states with tools to strengthen accountability and ensure high-quality educational opportunities for all students, including those served in alternative schools and programs. The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) conducted a review of 38 ESSA state plans to better understand how states are approaching federal accountability for alternative settings. The review focused on five key areas: inclusion of alternative settings in accountability systems and potential modifications to those systems, measures used in accountability systems, N-size and school size, where alternative education is mentioned in state plans, and descriptions of future plans or inquiry related to alternative education. This publication shares key findings and areas for future consideration.

The review demonstrated that the majority of states used the same accountability system for traditional and alternative settings for federal accountability purposes. Eight states included modifications in their accountability systems, and nine other states included additional information or clarification about alternative settings. With regard to accountability measures, the majority of states reviewed included extended-year graduation rates, only three states included completer rates, and approximately half of states included a measure of growth for high schools. The majority of states set an N-size of 10 or 20 for accountability purposes, as the minimum number of students necessary to create a subgroup. Each of these elements, accountability system, measures, and N-size, have implications for alternative settings which states should be aware of as they implement their new accountability systems. The publication explores the different sections of the plan in which states discuss alternative education and states future plans to address accountability for alternative settings to demonstrate how this issue intersects with a variety of other education issue areas.

The publication concludes with three areas of consideration for states: how ESSA can be used as a lever to ensure high-quality alternative settings, what continuous improvement and support can look like for these settings, and the importance of appropriate measures and data when holding alternative settings accountable.

Introduction

For students who are not successful in a traditional school setting, attending an alternative education program or school can be a game changer. High-quality alternative settings can provide students the opportunity to attend a smaller school with greater personalization, caring culture, opportunity for credit recovery and acceleration, meaningful relationships with caring adults, flexible scheduling and curriculum, and opportunity for youth voice and leadership, which can have a positive impact on student outcomes.^{1,2} Alternative education programs and schools, or as referred to in this publication, alternative settings, are an important part of the K-12 education system, and helping state and local education agencies support and improve them can lead to greater success for students.³

The Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed in 2015, provides state education agencies (SEAs) with tools to strengthen accountability and improve school performance, and alternative settings should be fully included in those efforts. In order to better understand how states are planning to hold alternative settings accountable under the federal accountability requirements of ESSA, AYPF reviewed 38 approved ESSA state plans to gather information on the following:

1. Inclusion of alternative settings in accountability systems and potential modifications to those systems
2. Measures used in the accountability system
3. N-Size and school size
4. Where alternative education is mentioned in the state plan
5. Description of future plans or inquiry related to alternative education

Throughout the past few years, the education field has analyzed ESSA state plans through various lenses, including equity, personalized learning, career readiness, and specific subpopulations. Alternative education intersects with many of these other aspects of state plans, and this publication can add to the knowledge of the field about how ESSA can improve accountability and outcomes for all students.

What is Alternative Education?

Definitions of alternative education differ across the United States. The primary criteria that states currently use to define alternative settings include: 1) the student populations served; 2) the setting type; and 3) the instructional or environmental characteristics.⁴ Alternative settings typically serve “at-risk”

¹ National Alternative Education Association. (2014). *Exemplary Practices 2.0: Standards of Quality and Program Evaluation 2014*. Retrieved from <http://the-naea.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/NAEA-Exemplary-Practices-2.0-2014.pdf>

² Aron, L. Y. (2006) *An Overview of Alternative Education*. The Urban Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/overview-alternative-education>

³ Almeida, C., Le, Cecilia, & Steinberg, A. with Cervantes, R. (2013). *Reinventing Alternative Education: An Assessment of Current State Policy and How to Improve It*. Jobs for the Future. Retrieved from <https://ifforg-prod-prime.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/AltEdBrief-090810.pdf>.

⁴ Deeds, C. & DePaoli, J. (2017). *Measuring Success: Accountability for Alternative Education*. American Youth Policy Forum and Civic Enterprises. Retrieved from <http://www.aypf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Measuring-Success-Accountability-for-Alt.-Ed.-.pdf>.

students who are often classified as chronically absent, overage and under-credited, re-engaging with school, having disciplinary infractions, or pregnant and/or parenting. The diversity in needs and circumstances of these students is indicative of the fact that, although all of these students may be educated in alternative settings, there is still a need for nuanced instruction and services. Additionally, the setting type (i.e., program, school, short-term, long-term) varies greatly across alternative settings, as do the environmental characteristics and instructional methods of these institutions. Within a state or school district, there can also be diversity among alternative settings.

Given that states can define and structure alternative education in many ways, it is important to understand each state's context when considering how accountability for alternative education is addressed in the ESSA state plan.

ESSA and Accountability for Alternative Settings

A primary focus of this review is to assess how states are treating alternative settings as part of the statewide accountability systems established within ESSA state plans. ESSA requires that states hold all public schools accountable for providing high-quality education to their students and developing a state plan that describes a statewide accountability system to identify schools needing support and improvement. In designing their ESSA state plans, states “have the opportunity to ensure that their accountability systems meaningfully measure success in alternative settings and are instructive to the state and to the federal government on how to better serve students in alternative settings.”⁵

Developing accountability for alternative settings is complex, given the diversity and variation among alternative schools and due to the fact that traditional measures of accountability, such as academic achievement or graduation rates, may not fully demonstrate the quality of the alternative setting. For example, alternative settings typically serve students who are at risk of dropping out or have already disengaged with school and therefore may be behind in credits or require extended graduation timelines. In acknowledgement of the unique circumstances of the student population served, states have taken a variety of approaches in developing their accountability systems, such as weighting measures differently or including measures such as reengagement rates or extended-year graduation rates.⁶

Accountability systems are not only a tool for identifying schools that are successful and those that need improvement, but also a strategy for allocating resources, attention, and support for both institutional and systematic improvement. Federal, state, and public accountability mechanisms can be used to hold alternative settings accountable, and states have approached accountability for alternative settings in a variety of ways.⁷ For the purpose of this review, AYPF focused on accountability at the federal level under ESSA state plans. However, it is important to acknowledge that **states have and can develop systems, policies, and other mechanisms of accountability for alternative settings apart from their ESSA state plans**, and thus this review of ESSA state plans likely does not represent all the state efforts related to

⁵ Deeds, C. & DePaoli, J. (2017). Pg. 10.

⁶ Deeds & DePaoli. (2017).

⁷ Deeds & DePaoli. (2017).

alternative education. ESSA is only one mechanism within the larger ecosystem of policy and tools that can be leveraged to support students in alternative settings.

For more information about how states and districts are approaching accountability for alternative settings, refer to [Measuring Success: Accountability for Alternative Education](#).

Methodology

AYPF staff reviewed approved ESSA state plans between September 2017-March 2018 and October 2018-January 2019. Given the timeframe and staff capacity, this publication is a review of 38 approved ESSA state plans, inclusive of the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.⁸ AYPF staff reviewed each state plan to: 1) Determine if the accountability system was inclusive of alternative settings and if there were any modifications for alternative settings; 2) Examine the measures used in their accountability system; 3) Identify the N-size for subgroup accountability; 4) Identify any additional mention of alternative settings or students served in those settings throughout the plan; and 5) Identify the state's future plans related to alternative education. Each of these items is discussed in greater detail below.

Review Findings

Accountability Systems

AYPF examined the statewide accountability systems described in ESSA state plans to learn if states mentioned alternative settings and any potential variation or modification for those settings. The review demonstrated two primary ways in which states are approaching accountability for alternative settings:

- **Same Accountability:** Accountability is the same for traditional and alternative settings. Please note, for the purposes of the designations in Appendix A, Figure 1 the reviewers assumed that the primary ESSA indicators listed in state plans are applicable to alternative settings unless otherwise stated.
- **Modified Accountability:** Accountability systems, as described in the state plan, have modifications for alternative settings. The reviewers observed these modifications in a few key areas:
 - Modifications in measures or indicators.
 - Modifications in intervention and support once identified as in need of comprehensive support and improvement.
 - Modifications in the process of how the alternative setting is held accountable and mention of where the student accountability information is reported (district or state).

Of the 38 states, 30 states had the same accountability for traditional and alternative settings for federal purposes, nine of which included additional information or clarification about alternative education settings. Among those nine states, one key piece of clarifying information was that although accountability

⁸ Approved state plans can be found at the Department of Education's website, found here: <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/statesubmission.html>

was the same for federal purposes, additional strategies and mechanisms were being used at the state level to provide more nuanced accountability for state purposes. Only eight states included modifications in their accountability system for alternative settings within their state plan. Please see Figure 1 in Appendix A for each state’s classification of same or modified accountability for alternative settings, specific language from the state plans, and links to the state plan for further reference.



The full infographic can be found [here](#).

Accountability Beyond State Plans

While ESSA requires that states hold all public schools accountable and develop a plan for the identification and improvement of schools, states can also develop methods of accountability and identification outside of their state ESSA plans. Some states included details about how they plan to address alternative settings, while others rarely mentioned or addressed alternative education at all. If a state did not mention an accountability mechanism for alternative education in their ESSA plans, it does not necessarily indicate that these states are not holding these settings accountable. Rather, states may have accountability mechanisms for alternative settings through state or local processes. It is important that whether incorporated in the ESSA state plan or through other accountability mechanisms, states ensure there are processes in place to identify which alternative settings are serving students well and which are in need of improvement.

Measures

Extended-Year Graduation Rate (EYGR)

ESSA requires states to include a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students and subgroups. States may also choose to include an extended-year graduation rate (EYGR) such as five-, six- and seven-year rates. These EYGRs can be given different weights within the graduation rate indicator.⁹ Alternative

⁹ More information on EYGR can be found here: http://www.aypf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Measuring-Success_Accountability-for-Alt.-Ed.-.pdf

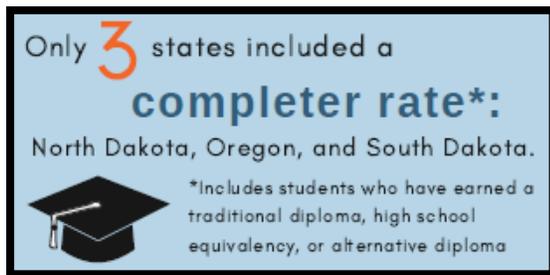
settings typically serve students who are at-risk of dropping out or have disconnected from school. The inclusion of EYGRs is crucial for alternative settings because they provide more flexibility for students who are progressing towards graduation on an extended timeline and can act as an incentive for schools and programs to reengage students.

The review focused on the graduation rate(s) used for accountability purposes in each state plan. Of the 38 states, 16 used four-year graduation rates, and 22 states included a four-year rate, as well as a combination of either five-, six-, or seven-year rates. For a state-by-state breakdown, reference Figure 2 in Appendix B.



The full infographic can be found at [here](#).

Completer Rate



The full infographic can be found [here](#).

Completion rates are another measure, in addition to graduation rates, of secondary credential attainment. A completer rate includes students who have earned a GED, another form of high-school equivalency, or an alternative diploma in addition to students that have earned a traditional diploma. Of the states that did include a completer rate, they mention reporting upon and collecting completion rates for accountability purposes. Figure 3 below displays information from three of the states that include a completer rate in their state plan.

Figure 3

State	Completer Rate Notes
North Dakota	North Dakota’s plan includes the GED completion as an indicator in their accountability system, separate from the graduation rate. A dropout who completes a North Dakota GED prior to 22 years of age (within three graduation cohorts) will be credited to the school administering the GED program as a graduate. GED graduates will account for up to 8 percent in the accountability system’s index for high schools. If there are no students eligible, then index values are applied equally to the College and Career Readiness and School Quality indicators. For more information, reference pages 51-52 of North Dakota state plan .
Oregon	Oregon has three School Quality and Student Success indicators in its accountability system, one of which is a five-year completer rate. Oregon has a goal that all students will earn a high school diploma or equivalent and measures progress toward this goal using a five-year high school completion rate, which is the percentage of students earning a regular or modified diploma or an extended diploma, GED, or adult high school diploma. Oregon has been calculating the five-year high school completer rate since 2009-2010.

	<p>The plan explicitly calls out alternative settings stating, “In addition, the completer rate more appropriately includes successful outcomes for students enrolled in alternative programs or alternative schools, who often serve students that arrive off-track for graduation within four years” (51). For more information, reference pages 51-52 of Oregon state plan.</p>
<p>South Dakota</p>	<p>Within their School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) indicator, South Dakota has included a measure of high school completion. The High School Completion Rate is the percent of students in the most recently completed school year who have attained a diploma or high school equivalency. The rate will be calculated for every school, district, the state, and for every subgroup at each level. The plan states “Utilizing both the Four-Year Cohort and High School Completion rates in the state’s overall accountability system fulfills federal accountability provisions, while also recognizing the work many high schools are accomplishing throughout the state ... By incorporating a High School Completion rate schools will be rewarded for getting students across the finish line, however that may happen.” (32). For more information, reference page 32 of South Dakota state plan.</p>

While only a few states include a completer rate in their accountability systems, other states made mention of requirements to report the number of students earning a GED or equivalent. For example, Hawaii’s state plan for Title I, Part D mentions that state agencies receiving funds through that program will need to collect and report the number of students who have earned a GED or equivalent to the Hawaii Department of Education annually as part of their Consolidated State Performance Report. To learn more, reference page 85 of Hawaii’s [state plan](#).

Additionally, other states include GED completion as an outcome that can receive points or weight within a college and career readiness indicator. For example, New York’s plan includes a College, Career, and Civic Readiness Index as a measure of school quality and student success. Within this index, schools earn credit for students that earn a high school equivalency diploma. For more information, reference pages 64-66 of New York’s [state plan](#). Similarly, Louisiana’s plan includes a Strength of Diploma Index that informs two indicators for high schools: Graduation Rate and Student Success. The Index includes the [HiSet](#) as a high school equivalency credential, and schools can earn points within the index for students who earn that credential. For more information, reference page 57 of Louisiana’s [state plan](#). Additionally, AYPF featured Louisiana’s Strength of Diploma Index in [Innovations in Accountability Measures & Processes: Three Case Studies for Alternative Education](#).

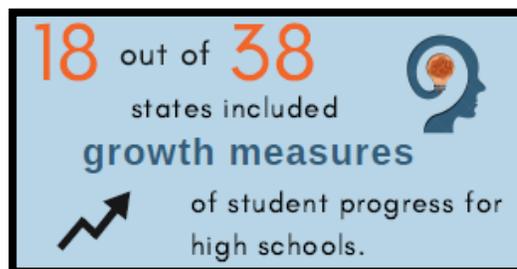
To learn more about other potential measures that states can use for postsecondary and workforce readiness, refer to page 15 in [Measuring Success: Accountability for Alternative Education](#).

Growth

Under ESSA, states must include an Academic Achievement Indicator that measures academic proficiency on annual statewide reading and mathematics assessments. States also have the option to include measures of academic growth for high school students.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) defines growth in a recent publication as the “academic performance of the *same* student or *same* collection of students over two or more points in time.”¹⁰ By including academic growth in accountability systems, states can report on student progress over time, in contrast to proficiency measures, which demonstrate how many students meet academic benchmarks.

Given that alternative settings typically serve students behind academic benchmarks, growth measures provide an opportunity to measure progress, can allow states to more meaningfully differentiate between high- and low-quality settings, and incentivize improvement of all students.¹¹ Of the 38 states, 18 included a measure of student growth within their accountability system for high schools. The growth measures were either their own indicator or a component or measure within an indicator. For a state-by-state breakdown, reference Figure 4 in Appendix C.



The full infographic can be found [here](#).

N-size and School Size

ESSA requires that “each State shall describe, with respect to any provisions under this part that require disaggregation of information by each subgroup of students, the minimum number of students that the State determines are necessary to be included to carry out such requirements and how that number is statistically sound, which shall be the same State-determined number for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State.”¹² In other words, states are required to set the minimum number of students needed to form a subgroup for accountability and reporting purposes, also referred to as N-size. If a school does not have enough students in a particular subgroup to meet the N-size, then the school does not need to report for that subgroup or disaggregate them when determining performance and the need for targeted support and improvement efforts.

While in some states the N-size for accountability and reporting is different, the reviewers focused on the N-size only for accountability purposes. Of the 38 states, 12 states use 10 students as their N-size, four states use 15, 14 states use 20, two states use 25, and six states use 30. For a state-by state breakdown, reference Figure 5 in Appendix D.

Additionally, ESSA allows local education agencies to forgo implementing improvement efforts for poor performance in schools that serve fewer than 100 students. Many alternative programs or schools are often small and enroll few students,¹³ which could mean that some programs or schools are not subject to the same improvement requirements or do not benefit from those services. South Dakota, in the annual meaningful differentiation section of their plan, references how they will address accountability and evaluation for small and special schools in the state.

¹⁰ The Council of Chief State School Officers. (2017). *Considerations for Including Growth in ESSA State Accountability Systems*. Pg. 5. Retrieved from https://www.nciea.org/sites/default/files/pubs-tmp/CCSSO_Growth_Resource.pdf

¹¹ Deeds & DePaoli. (2017).

¹² Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), Pub. L. No. 114–95 (2015). Sec 1111 (C)(3)(A)(i)

¹³ More information on school size and interventions: http://www.aypf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Measuring-Success_Accountability-for-Alt.-Ed.-.pdf

Mention of Alternative Education in ESSA State Plans

For states that did mention alternative education in their state plans, we observed the references in the various sections noted below.

- **Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies**
This section addresses improving basic programs operated by local education agencies. In it, states must identify their statewide accountability systems and school support and improvement activities. States that mentioned alternative education in Title 1, Part A often included the information in sections 4.v. Annual Meaningful Differentiation, 4.vi. Identification of Schools, and 7. School Transitions.
- **Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children**
This section addresses the needs of migratory children and coordination of services to address those needs. Often, alternative settings are mentioned as a means to help migrant students recover credits and assist in continuing to progress academically, especially those who are at risk of dropping out.
- **Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk**
This section addresses the prevention and intervention efforts for children and youth who are neglected, delinquent, or at-risk, primarily focused on youth involved in the juvenile justice system. States mention alternative settings as an academic pathway for youth transitioning from a correctional facility. In some states, juvenile justice schools are also considered alternative education schools or programs.
- **Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction**
This section addresses how the state will support teachers and school leaders and improve processes related to teacher preparation, certification, and licensing. Title II, Part A also asks states to address how they will improve equitable access to effective teachers. One state described how they provide support to alternative settings by providing program specialists to schools throughout the state.
- **Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants**
This section addresses how the state will use federal funds to improve academic achievement by providing all students access to a well-rounded education and improving school conditions and the use of technology. For example, one state described how they intend to use the funds to support work associated with student behavior, discipline, and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). They analyzed data related to school discipline and concluded that additional supports and resources were needed to effectively implement behavioral interventions and disciplinary practices, particularly related to students attending alternative settings.

- **Title VII, Subpart B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

This section addresses how the state will support the academic success of youth experiencing homelessness. This includes how the state plans to improve processes to identify homeless youth, remove barriers for youth to access academic and extracurricular programming and accrue credit, improve readiness for college, and support school personnel who serve homeless youth. Often, alternative settings are mentioned as a means for students experiencing homelessness to recover credits and continue their education, especially for students who may have disengaged from school.

- **Appendices**

A few states also mentioned alternative education in their appendices, such as attaching materials from the stakeholder engagement and feedback sessions that were required during the ESSA plan drafting process. Two states had materials in their appendices that discussed alternative accountability and alternative settings and how they relate to the educational success of Native American students.

Identifying which sections of the state plans mention alternative settings offers an indication of how states are conceptualizing alternative education and how these settings can be utilized and improved. ESSA requires states to establish a system of annual meaningful differentiation of schools. Title I Part A (4)(v)(c) of the Revised State Template for the Consolidated State Plan, released in March 2017 by the U.S. Department of Education, asks states to describe if they will use different methodologies for annual meaningful differentiation of schools for which an accountability determination cannot be made and to indicate the type of schools that would apply. Some states used this opportunity to discuss different accountability methods for alternative settings. Additionally, given that alternative settings often serve at-risk students, it is no surprise that states mention alternative education in sections of the plan that describe support to underserved subpopulations such as youth involved in the juvenile justice system, migratory children, and youth experiencing homelessness. Very few states mentioned alternative settings in relation to effective instruction, Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants, and in their appendices.

States' Future Plans for Alternative Education

During the review of each state plan, the reviewer examined if the state included plans to incorporate other elements or mechanisms to hold alternative settings accountable. Of the 38 plans reviewed, 13 state plans indicated future plans and made explicit call-outs about alternative education (See Figure 6 in Appendix E.) These future plans include creating modified mechanisms of accountability for alternative settings, expanding alternative education options for students, reviewing data and trends related to student dropout and transition, and focusing on effective practices and improvement strategies for alternative settings.

In addition to the 13 states that made explicit references to alternative education, other states not included in Figure 6 mentioned possible future actions that could have an impact on youth served in alternative settings, such as developing early warning systems for students at-risk of disengaging from school, implementing new growth measures, and including tools to measure school climate and culture.

Areas for Further Consideration

This review of 38 ESSA state plans provides valuable insight into how states are thinking about alternative education and including alternative settings in their federal accountability system. The review raises a number of issues that state leaders should consider as they seek to improve educational outcomes for all students, particularly through their alternative settings, such as using ESSA as a lever to ensure high-quality alternative settings, continuous improvement and support of alternative settings, and appropriate measures and data to assess alternative settings.

Using ESSA as a Lever to Ensure High-Quality Alternative Settings

The accountability systems developed under ESSA provide an opportunity for states to evaluate how they are serving students in alternative settings and how they are holding those settings accountable. As demonstrated in the Accountability Systems section, some states have dedicated time and resources to understanding how annual meaningful differentiation and identification of schools for improvement efforts will affect alternative schools, and some have adjusted their accountability systems to reflect the unique needs of alternative education. But many states have not addressed these issues in their ESSA plans in any great detail. As implementation of ESSA continues, states should revisit their state plans to focus on strategies to support and improve their alternative education as part of their overall accountability systems.

Questions to Consider

- Is alternative education mentioned in my state’s ESSA state plan?
- How are alternative settings held accountable for federal purposes?
- Are there additional mechanisms of accountability at the state and/or local level for alternative settings?
- Is accountability modified or differentiated for alternative settings, compared to traditional settings? What are the implications of the same or modified accountability?

Continuous Improvement and Support of Alternative Settings

Ultimately, the accountability systems under ESSA identify schools for comprehensive and targeted support and improvement. ESSA provides an opportunity for states to hold alternative settings accountable, meaningfully identify which settings are in need of improvement, and develop and implement plans for continuous improvement. However, in our review of the state ESSA plans, we observed that most states do not explicitly mention alternative education or alternative settings in their identification and improvement plans for underperforming schools.

States must also think about what evidence-based improvement efforts for these settings will look like if and when these settings are identified. As stated by Deeds and DePaoli, “ESSA permits the use of differentiated evidence-based interventions in schools that predominantly serve students who are returning after having exited without receiving a diploma or who, based on grade or age, are significantly

off-track to meeting high school graduation requirements.”¹⁴ While ESSA requires that interventions for school improvement be evidence-based, there is little evidence about effective interventions in alternative settings. More research is needed about which interventions work and for which student populations and to help states determine the most effective strategies for improvement.

Questions to Consider

- What school improvement processes are currently in place for alternative schools?
- How are these processes, if at all, differentiated from ones offered to traditional schools that have been identified for improvement?
- Are these improvement processes included in the ESSA state plan? Are there other improvement processes for alternative settings in place at the state or local level?

Appropriate Measures and Data to Assess Alternative Settings

The measures used in an accountability system and the weights assigned to those measures can have implications for how many alternative settings are identified for improvement. According to the [2018 Building a Grad Nation](#) report, alternative schools are over-represented among low-graduation-rate high schools,¹⁵ often because of the educational challenges facing their students and because a single indicator like a four-year graduation rate may not holistically represent the success of a student or school. Given the value and priority typically given to measuring graduation rates in accountability systems, there is a likelihood that many alternative settings will be identified as in need of improvement under ESSA, while a more complex assessment may yield different outcomes. It is also important to ensure that the measures provide enough data to meaningfully differentiate among alternative settings.

For more information about how states and districts are using other measures for alternative settings, refer to [Measuring Success: Accountability for Alternative Education](#) and [Innovations in Accountability Measures: Three Case Studies for Alternative Education](#).

The minimum number of students that states determine are necessary to require disaggregated information for a subgroup and the size of a school are also important considerations when considering accountability for alternative settings. If the N-size limits reporting on subgroups in alternative settings, it will be difficult for the state, school district, and public to examine students’ performance, which could have negative consequences for some groups of students. If alternative education programs or schools have fewer than 100 students, they may not be identified for improvement and the resources and supports that follow.

¹⁴ Deeds & DePaoli, 2017. Pg. 18.

¹⁵ DePaoli, J., Balfanz, R., Atwell, M. N., & Bridgeland, J. (2018) *Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Raising High School Graduation Rates*. Civic Enterprises and the Everyone Graduates Center at the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University. Retrieved from <https://gradnation.americaspromise.org/2018-building-grad-nation-report>.

Questions to Consider

- What measures are used to hold alternative settings accountable? Do they align with the goal and purpose of the alternative setting?
- Are there alternative schools and programs in my state that serve less than 100 students? If so, are there mechanisms in place to ensure quality and support improvement?
- How is my state meaningfully differentiating performance among alternative settings?

Conclusion

The state plans offer a wealth of knowledge about how each state is supporting their student population, including students in alternative settings. While the plans are complex, often very long documents, they provide evidence of how some states are addressing this issue and areas that deserve more attention. Various states also noted in their state plans the importance of engaging the full range of educational stakeholders to continue to think about alternative education.

Accountability is one way to ensure that students served in alternative settings have access to high-quality educational opportunities and that those settings have the resources needed to improve. The Every Student Succeeds Act is an opportunity and lever, among many others, that can and should be utilized by states to better serve students whose needs are not met in traditional education settings. This publication provides an overview of how states plan to address federal accountability requirements and how it impacts students served in alternative settings. We hope that states and school districts will be able to use this publication to learn from their peers and colleagues and to place more emphasis on strategies for supporting alternative education, now and in the future.

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APPENDIX A

Figure 1 includes the 38 states with approved plans that were reviewed to assess if accountability for alternative settings was the same or modified compared to traditional settings and additional notes or mention of alternative education stated in reference to the statewide accountability system established under ESSA.

Figure 1

State	Same or Modified Accountability?	State Plan Language
Arizona	Same, but mention of modification at the state level.	<p>“Though the Arizona Department of Education and the State Board of Education’s vision was to create a unified state and federal system of accountability for all Arizona public schools and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), the interpretation of ESSA law related to accountability contradicts the requirements of Arizona State law related to the A-F Letter Grade Accountability System required by Arizona Revised Statutes §15- 241...As a result, Arizona’s system of meaningful differentiation of schools under ESSA will vary slightly from Arizona’s A-F Accountability system in that alternative schools are required to be included within the traditional schools’ model for the purposes of accountability under ESSA while remaining separate for the purposes of accountability under state law” (pg. 17 of Arizona state plan).</p> <p>“As described above, alternative schools, for the purposes of ESSA, will be included in one system of annual meaningful differentiation. Within this federal system, schools that are designated as alternative will be noted so that stakeholders will clearly understand these schools’ mission as it relates to a comprehensive system of education for all Arizona children. Though unable to provide a separate accountability for alternative schools via ESSA, the State Board of Education must also balance the requirements of state law. Therefore, in compliance with A.R.S. §15-241, the State Board of Education has developed procedures for ensuring annual meaningful differentiation for those schools that have been determined to be an alternative school. Below is the proposed model for 9-12 Alternative Schools. At this time, this model is not yet approved by the State Board of Education and is still being modified.” (pg. 32 of Arizona state plan)</p> <p>For more information, reference pages 17 and 30-35 of Arizona state plan.</p>
Arkansas	Same	
California	Same, but modification at the state level.	<p>“California’s accountability system will be applied to all schools, including charter schools, and all student groups with 30 or more students.” (page 21 of California state plan)</p> <p>In the state plan, there is a link to the CDE California Accountability Model & School Dashboard Web page, further describing California’s accountability model. On the website, there are resources about California’s modified methods of accountability for alternative schools, including the Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) program.</p>
Connecticut	Same	

Delaware	Modified	<p>“All public schools that are identified as ‘accountability schools’... under State policy will receive overall text-based summative ratings annually, in addition to text-based ratings for each indicator in the DSSF [Delaware School Success Framework] where applicable...There are two categories used to identify the accountability status of a school, including schools that serve special populations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category 1 – Schools that are Title I schools for the given year. • Category 2 – Schools that are not Title I schools for the given year but have enrolled students generated through the unit count process. <p>If a school falls within either of these two categories, the school receives an accountability rating. However, some schools serving special populations are not considered accountability schools. In this case, students are reassigned back to an appropriate accountability school. As such, the DOE [Delaware Department of Education] accountability system captures all students regardless of the school they attend. Charter schools that are identified as serving “at-risk” students are governed under state charter school law and may have alternate measures above and beyond the measures included in the statewide accountability system.” (pages 54-55 of Delaware state plan)</p>
District of Columbia	Same, but modifications may be made by the state.	<p>“For those schools for which an accountability determination based on the system of annual meaningful differentiation cannot appropriately be made based on the implementation of the statewide system (because of grade configuration, student population, or another factor), OSSE [Office of the State Superintendent of Education] may develop an alternative methodology which will ensure meaningful differentiation and will allow the ability to identify such schools for Comprehensive Support or Targeted Support as applicable.” (page 30 of District of Columbia state plan)</p>
Florida	Same	<p>“...alternative schools and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) center schools will receive a federal percent of points index and the component information will be reported on the school report card required under ESSA. Each DJJ [Department of Juvenile Justice] education program will receive a federal percent of points index and these components will be reported in the school report card required under ESSA. The federal percent of points index will be used to determine whether these schools (K-3, alternative, ESE, and DJJ) are identified for CS&I [Comprehensive Support and Improvement] or TS&I [Targeted Support and Improvement].” (page 23 of Florida state plan)</p>
Georgia	Same	<p>“All schools, including primary and alternative schools, are eligible to receive a summative CCRPI [College and Career Ready Performance Index] score. Schools, however, must have a Content Mastery score in order to be assigned a summative rating. When a school does not have a Content Mastery component score, an overall score will not be calculated; however, available indicator and component data will be reported.” (pages 39-40 of Georgia state plan)</p>
Hawaii	Same	
Illinois	Same	<p>“Historically, many students receiving alternative programming in alternative educational settings fell outside the administration of the ISBE [Illinois State Board of Education] and these students were either represented within the system or not based on their specific placement at the time assessments were administered. ISBE is in ongoing dialogue with the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) to more fully integrate these students into the accountability system. As appropriate, this section of the application will be amended to reflect changes in practice.” (page 86 of Illinois state plan)</p>
Indiana	Modified	<p>“Indiana has a separate accountability system for adult high schools that predominantly serve a population that belongs to a graduation cohort that has already graduated; or are over the age of eighteen at the time the student was enrolled at the school. The</p>

		annual summative A-F letter grade for an adult high school is based on a Graduation Rate Indicator and a College and Career Readiness Indicator. The Graduation Rate Indicator is comprised of a graduation to enrollment percentage metric (number of students graduating during the school year / within-year average number of students enrolled), and the graduation rate metric used in the general statewide accountability system. The College and Career Readiness Indicator is the same metric used in the general statewide accountability system; however, the goal for adult high schools is for at least 80 percent of its graduates to demonstrate college or career readiness.” (page 55 of Indiana state plan)
Kansas	Same	“All public schools within the State, Title I and non-Title I, will be reported on the building report card and receive an annual meaningful differentiation designation. This includes virtual and alternative stand-alone schools.” (page 34 of Kansas state plan)
Kentucky	Modified accountability for alternative education programs.	“DSS [Division of Student Success] monitors compliance and quality in alternative education programs, including annual identification of Alternative Programs of Distinction that can be a model to other alternative education programs. These programs are recognized annually by the Kentucky Board of Education.” (page 112 of Kentucky state plan). For more information about alternative education, reference the Kentucky Department of Education website .
Louisiana	Same, but mention of identifying quality indicators for alternative schools.	“ESSA provides an opportunity for states to reconsider the way they measure and report on the performance of alternative schools that serve traditionally disadvantaged student populations with unique needs. Quality alternative education can provide students who are struggling or who have left their traditional school an opportunity to achieve in a new learning environment. The LDE [Louisiana Department of Education] will convene a study group of key external stakeholders representing local school systems, student and family advocacy organizations, student behavior and discipline experts, and juvenile justice stakeholders during spring 2017 in order to identify quality indicators of effective alternative education and to recommend accountability measures appropriate for such schools.” (page 64 of Louisiana state plan)
Maine	Same	
Maryland	Same	
Massachusetts	Same, but mention of the potential for differentiation in the future.	“Massachusetts does not currently differentiate between schools whose mission is to serve alternative populations, but plans to explore a protocol to do so for the first time following the 2017-18 school year.” (page 61 of Massachusetts state plan)
Michigan	Same, but will seek a waiver and explain a parallel system of accountability in development for the future.	“Traditional accountability systems may be insensitive to the challenges faced by many alternative education-focused entities. In response, Michigan has committed to developing a new, voluntary, parallel system of accountability for alternative education programs based on an application and relevant school demographics. Due to the limitation of the Every Student Succeeds Act, Michigan will seek a waiver for the system that has been in development for the last two years. At this time, Michigan will include alternative education-focused entities in its index-based identification system. The following description is provided in the interest of transparency, and to continue the development process of this parallel system. This will be a fully separate opt-in alternative to Michigan’s identification system, where all schools that qualify are eligible to choose this parallel path. Over the past two years, MDE [Michigan Department of Education] has convened external stakeholder in order to identify quality indicators of effective alternative education and to recommend accountability measures appropriate for such schools. Accountability for alternative schools would begin with a one-year pilot followed by full implementation. The student population

		comprising these alternative schools will exclusively contribute to the alternative accountability system.” (pages 40-41 of Michigan state plan)
Minnesota	Same	
Missouri	Same	
Montana	Same	
Nevada	Same	
New Jersey	Same	“New Jersey’s alternative schools are constituted as separate schools subject to the same state accountability provisions as any other school within a LEA and the state. Alternative schools serve specific student groups across one or more LEA and include: magnet schools; theme high schools; vocational education programs; schools for students housed in state facilities; and other alternative schools. Although some alternative programs are constituted as small schools within larger school entities, they are included as part of the regularly constituted school’s accountability system.” (page 76 of New Jersey state plan)
New Mexico	Modified	Schools that serve special populations are likely to fall under the Supplemental Accountability Measures/Model (SAM). Page 65 of the state plan links to School Grading website , which provides more information about SAM schools.
New York	Modified	<p>“New York will handle alternative high schools that are identified as among the lowest performing in the State for more than three years slightly differently from how it will handle other schools. Rather than automatically placing these schools into Receivership, the Commissioner will partner with the district to determine the most appropriate interventions for that school. The interventions under consideration may still include Receivership.” (page 79 of New York state plan)</p> <p>“Alternative schools (e.g., Transfer high schools and Special Act schools) will not be automatically placed into Receivership; instead, the Commissioner will work with the district, should any alternative school be identified as among the lowest-performing for more than three consecutive years, to determine the most appropriate interventions for that school.” (page 101 of New York state plan)</p>
North Dakota	Same	<p>“North Dakota stipulates that all public schools, regardless of grade configuration or service population, will participate in the state accountability system. State law defines any public school to include any educational institution supported through State funding and administered through a public school board. North Dakota’s accountability system will include all public schools identified as K-12, all alternative public schools, the North Dakota School for the Deaf and the North Dakota State Youth Correctional Center.” (page 72 of North Dakota state plan)</p> <p>For more specifics on schools serving special populations, reference pages 73-75 in the state plan.</p>
Ohio	Same, but modifications at the state level.	<p>Pages 44-45 of Ohio’s state plan describe that “Ohio has accountability rules to ensure that students who attend specialized schools are included in the state’s accountability system and are treated the same as any other public school student.” In this section, the plan describes how special student populations, students served outside a district, students attending state agency schools, and those attending Dropout Prevention and Recovery Community (Charter) Schools are served and how those institutions are held accountable.</p> <p>In regards to special student populations, the plan explains, “For accountability purposes, Ohio does not differentiate between public schools that serve special populations of students and those that serve traditional populations.”</p>

		In regards to Dropout Prevention and Recovery Community (Charter) Schools, the plan explains these schools “...typically serve a unique student body that is much different than traditional high schools. These students often are several years behind in educational credits and courses taken, older than traditional high school students and, in some cases, attempting to earn credit several years after their four-year cohort has graduated. Ohio uses the same standards, data, and calculations to identify schools as Priority (Comprehensive) or Focus (Targeted Support). There are no separate accountability standards for these schools for the purpose of federal accountability and identification. At the same time, as part of the state’s accountability system, these schools also receive Ohio’s Dropout Prevention and Recovery (DOPR) Report Card. It can be a challenge to apply traditional measures to the progress of these students, thereby limiting the state’s ability to evaluate schools using traditional measures. The traditional measures may apply to some students, but only a subset of students will meet accountability rules. The traditional measures may not necessarily reflect the performance of the entire student population of the Dropout Prevention and Recovery school. Therefore, these schools will also receive Ohio’s Dropout Prevention and Recovery (DOPR) Report Card.” To learn more about Ohio’s DOPR Report Card, reference pages 44-45 of the state plan.
Oregon	Modified	“Alternative schools and youth corrections schools will be included in the accountability systems; however, the indicators used for their designation for comprehensive support or targeted improvement will be based on their five-year completion rate, rather than the four-year graduation rate. Many of these students are not on track when entering these schools, and basing accountability determinations on the five-year high school completion rate will provide a better measure of the effectiveness of these schools. In addition, Oregon’s system of supports and interventions will look at the unique circumstances for each of these schools (local data on credit recovery and increased attendance/engagement) in order to make final accountability determinations and recommend supports and interventions.” (page 55 of Oregon state plan).
Puerto Rico	Same	
Pennsylvania	Same	“Pennsylvania does not plan to institute distinct accountability or annual meaningful differentiation rules for schools designed to serve special populations.” (page 56 of Pennsylvania state plan)
South Dakota	Modified	In the annual meaningful differentiation section of South Dakota’s state plan, there is description of how the state addresses students attending unique facilities, and small and special schools. In regards to unique facilities in which the institution’s mission is not primary education, but rather unique needs a student might have, the student will either remain accountable to his or her resident district, or in the case of state placement, will remain accountable at the state level. For more information, reference page 38 of the state plan . In regards to small and special schools, the plan describes that “...schools scattered throughout the state meet unique needs and challenges of students beyond a student’s education...it is inappropriate or even impossible to apply the rules of the SPI [School Performance Index] process as laid out above to these schools. Yet SD DOE [South Dakota Department of Education] continues to ensure that these schools are not forgotten in overall accountability through the Small and Special School Audit process, a process run annually.” For more information about how schools are determined “special” and how they are held accountable, reference pages 37-38 of the state plan.
Tennessee	Same	
Texas	Same	

Vermont	Same, as there are no public schools serving special populations or those in non-traditional education settings.	“ESSA requires that states establish alternative protocols for assessing student performance when a public school exists for a specific population: for example, students receiving programming in non-traditional educational settings, students attending juvenile rehabilitation centers, students enrolled in state public schools for the blind, or schools exclusively serving recently arrived English learners. Currently Vermont does not have public schools that meet these descriptions; however, all Vermont students who attend these types of independent institutions inside of Vermont must take Vermont’s state assessments, and their data is linked back to the Supervisory Union/Supervisory District (SU/SD) that pays their educational tuition. By creating the second tier of accountability at the SU/SD level, Vermont is able to include a larger number of these students when making accountability determinations.” (page 62 of Vermont state plan)
Washington	Modified	“All public schools are included in the state’s accountability system, but the support for some school types may be approached differently. OSPI [Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction], in partnership with the SBE [State Board of Education] shall consider whether there ought to be an alternate accountability framework for some school types, such as re-engagement schools. OSPI staff will provide guidance to these schools based on nationally recognized and state identified best practices that support each special population.” (page 44 of Washington state plan)
West Virginia	Same	
Wisconsin	Same, but alternative process for schools which cannot be assigned an accountability score.	<p>“Wisconsin already has an alternate accountability process under Wisconsin’s separate state authorized accountability system to assign an alternate rating to those schools that cannot be assigned a regular accountability score. This applies to schools having no tested grades, schools with fewer than 20 full academic year students enrolled in tested grades, new schools, and schools exclusively serving at-risk students... alternate accountability only applies to schools for which there is insufficient data to calculate a score.” (page 44 of Wisconsin state plan)</p> <p>The plan further describes the accountability process and how it relates to ESSA: “The Alternate Accountability process involves a district-supervised school self-evaluation designed around specific performance indicators (which have included academic performance, growth, attendance, and graduation rates). Schools must report performance relative to the performance indicators, resulting in an overall summative rating, either “Satisfactory Progress” or “Needs Improvement.” Wisconsin will continue to use this same process, which has been in place in the state for five years, to meet requirements outlined in ESSA. DPI [Department of Public Instruction] is committed to work with Alternate Accountability schools to align the alternate accountability process, performance indicators, and identifications with federal ESSA requirements. Specifically, the summative alternate ratings named above will correspond to ESSA identifications. Any school in the alternate accountability process with the “Needs Improvement” rating in the current year and in either of the previous two school years will be identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI).” (page 44 of Wisconsin state plan)</p>
Wyoming	Same	

APPENDIX B

Figure 2 displays the graduation rate(s) used for accountability purposes in the state plans reviewed. Figure 2 is not intended to indicate the graduation rate that is used to determine which schools are identified as failing to graduate one-third or more of their students for purposes of comprehensive support and improvement.

Figure 2

State	Graduation Rate or Extended Year Graduation Rate
Arizona	4,5,6,7
Arkansas	4,5
California	4
Connecticut	4,6
Delaware	4,5,6
District of Columbia*	4
Florida	4
Georgia	4,5
Hawaii	4
Illinois	4,5,6
Indiana	4,5
Kansas	4
Kentucky	4,5
Louisiana*	4
Maine	4,5,6
Maryland	4,5
Massachusetts*	4
Michigan	4,5,6
Minnesota	4,7
Missouri	4
Montana	4
Nevada	4,5
New Jersey	4,5
New Mexico	4,5,6
New York	4,5,6
North Dakota	4,5
Ohio	4,5
Oregon*	4
Pennsylvania	4,5
Puerto Rico	4
South Dakota	4
Tennessee	4
Texas	4
Vermont	4,6

Washington	4
West Virginia	4,5
Wisconsin	4,7
Wyoming	4

States with an asterisk indicate that an extended-year graduation rate is included as part of the state’s School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) indicator. While these states use a four-year graduation rate for their graduation rate indicator, within their SQSS indicator, they have chosen to include extended-year graduation rates.

APPENDIX C

Of the 38 state plans reviewed, Figure 4 displays the states that have included a measure of student growth for high schools within their accountability system, whether it be its own indicator or as a component or measure within an indicator.

Figure 4

State	Student Growth
Arizona	✓
Arkansas	✓
California	✓
Connecticut	✓
Delaware	✓
District of Columbia	
Florida	✓
Georgia	✓
Hawaii	
Illinois	
Indiana	✓*
Kansas	
Kentucky	
Louisiana	✓
Maine	
Maryland	
Massachusetts	✓
Michigan	✓
Minnesota	
Missouri	
Montana	
Nevada	
New Jersey	
New Mexico	✓
New York	✓
North Dakota	
Ohio	✓
Oregon	
Pennsylvania	✓
Puerto Rico	
South Dakota	
Tennessee	✓
Texas	
Vermont	✓
Washington	

West Virginia	
Wisconsin	
Wyoming	✓

* The inclusion of growth in the Academic Achievement Indicator for high school will cease after the 2019-2020 school year with the 2022 graduation cohort.

APPENDIX D

Figure 5 displays the N-size used for accountability purposes in the 38 state plans. In some states, the N-size for accountability purposes and for reporting is different. If there is a difference in N-size for accountability and reporting, it is indicated in section ii.e. of the state plan.

Figure 5

State	N-size
Arizona	20
Arkansas	15
California	30
Connecticut	20
Delaware	15
District of Columbia	10
Florida	10
Georgia	15
Hawaii	20
Illinois	20
Indiana	20
Kansas	30
Kentucky	10
Louisiana	10
Maine	10
Maryland	10*
Massachusetts	20
Michigan	30
Minnesota	20
Missouri	30
Montana	10
Nevada	10
New Jersey	20
New Mexico	20
New York	30
North Dakota	10
Ohio	15
Oregon	20
Pennsylvania	20
Puerto Rico	10
South Dakota	10
Tennessee	30
Texas	25**
Vermont	25

Washington	20
West Virginia	20
Wisconsin	20
Wyoming	10

* The N-size for the graduation indicator will be 30.

**To ensure small schools and districts are held accountable, the All Students group minimum size is 10 students, while the student subgroup N-size is 25.

APPENDIX E

Figure 6 includes information from 13 of the 38 state plans reviewed that focus on future plans for alternative education accountability.

Figure 6

State	State Plan Language and Notes Related to Future Plans
Arizona	<p>“There will be two accountability systems. One system will meet the requirements of ESSA to create a system of meaningful differentiation which includes all schools on the same system of measurement: traditional and alternative. This federal system compares schools against each other regardless of the school’s mission resulting in a comprehensive look at all schools against one set of measures. The federal system will identify schools for both Comprehensive and Targeted Supports and Improvements as required by ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D).</p> <p>The second system for state accountability, based on stakeholder feedback and reflective of state statute, employs a separate methodology for traditional and alternative schools...Cut scores have not yet been established by the State Board of Education. In order to determine cut scores, all the points a school earned in each indicator is totaled and then divided by the total number of points for which a school is eligible in order to calculate a percentage earned. Once FY17 school data is finalized such that the percentage earned is available for each school, the Board will evaluate the results and determine the categories (i.e., X% to x% = “A”) that define an “A” school, “B” school, etc.” (pages 30-31)</p> <p>“...in compliance with A.R.S. §15-241, the State Board of Education has developed procedures for ensuring annual meaningful differentiation for those schools that have been determined to be an alternative school...At this time, this model is not yet approved by the State Board of Education and is still being modified.” (page 32) To learn more about Arizona’s proposed model for K-8 and 9-12 Alternative Schools, reference pages 33-35 of Arizona state plan.</p>
Connecticut	<p>Connecticut’s state plan includes Strategy Profiles, referenced in the Equity and Excellence Connecticut’s Comprehensive Education Plan (2016-2021) Implementation and Timeline table under the Strategy Leader Training section. The Strategy Profiles were included in Appendix B of the plan. The first draft strategy profile describes efforts to improve alternative education settings/programs by facilitating the implementation of “The Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings” to impact graduation rates and overall well-being of students. To learn more, reference pages 232-235 of Connecticut state plan.</p>
Hawaii	<p>“To provide alternative education settings for secondary students who continue to struggle in the traditional schools, Hawaii is exploring alternative high school programs. HIDOE [Hawaii Department of Education] currently provides alternative education programs through its Storefront/High Core program, Olomana School, and two Community Schools for Adults. The Storefront program and Olomana School are alternative education settings aimed at reforming (sic) at-risk students. Storefront students graduate with a high school diploma from their home school; Olomana’s students earn a high school diploma from Olomana. The Community Schools for Adults, which receive federal funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, provide a competency-based program and a high school equivalency preparation program and issue a community school diploma upon the successful completion of these programs. HIDOE will expand our alternative education opportunities by creating innovative learning options for students to earn a high school diploma within our K-12 structure.” (pages 71-72 of Hawaii state plan)</p>
Illinois	<p>“ISBE [Illinois State Board of Education] is in ongoing dialogue with the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) to more fully integrate these students into the accountability system.” (page 86 of Illinois state plan)</p>

Kentucky	<p>In the plan’s section addressing the Disproportionate Access to Educators, Kentucky describes the development of a consolidating monitoring process. As described in the plan “Consolidated Monitoring,” it will identify districts through a risk-based assessment that is currently being developed by KDE [Kentucky Department of Education]. Consolidated Monitoring provides districts an opportunity to review state (e.g., alternative programs, career and technical education, preschool) and federal programs (e.g., Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, Title V, IDEA, McKinney-Vento) with an eye toward effective implementation and collaboration. Aside from individual program reports, districts are provided consolidated reports that represent an opportunity for collaboration among the programs. Program monitors note effective practices identified during the monitoring visit as well as provide recommendations and corrective action plans for addressing noted common concerns and findings of noncompliance under federal and state law. Thus, Consolidated Monitoring provides for the identification and sharing of best practices, along with the remediation of deficiencies. These reports provide opportunities for programs to collaborate, streamline implementation and increase success.” (pages 103-104 of Kentucky state plan)</p>
Louisiana	<p>As mentioned in Figure 4, the Louisiana Department of Education will convene a study group of stakeholders to identify quality indicators for effective alternative education. Other sections of the plan made references to additional changes in the future.</p> <p>“During the June 2017 meeting of the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and following several meetings with diverse stakeholders and site visits to alternative education settings, the board approved changes to its regulations in order to implement a specialized accountability system for schools operated within Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) secure care centers. While these educational sites will continue to be subject to accountability in terms of a performance score, letter grade, and reporting in the same manner as traditional schools, additional expectations have been added to ensure that the needs of this unique student population are addressed. (page 110 of Louisiana state plan)</p> <p>“The above enhancements [referring to Title I, Part D program objectives and outcomes] specific to OJJ secure care schools will also inform related improvements in the educational accountability of non-secure care schools and alternative education in LEAs. The LDE is in the process of working with a group of diverse stakeholders to present regulatory recommendations to the state education board later this year. (page 111 of Louisiana state plan)</p>
Maine	<p>“The SEA’s Office of Truancy, Dropout Prevention, and Alternative Education will review and make available to SAUs [school administrative unit] data regarding academic and attendance trends at educational transition points. The Office will provide technical assistance to LEAs to address transition issues that may contribute to students’ dropping out. Maine LEAs are mandated to appoint Dropout Prevention Committees with broad community, youth, and school participation at every individual school unit. The SEA can support local districts in revising their dropout prevention plans to specifically address transition issues.” (pages 85-86 of Maine state plan)</p>
Massachusetts	<p>As mentioned in Figure 4, Massachusetts plans to explore a protocol to differentiate alternative schools following the 2017-18 school year.</p>
Michigan	<p>As mentioned in Figure 4, Michigan is in the process of developing a parallel accountability system for alternative settings.</p>
Minnesota	<p>To assist schools and districts with identifying evidence-based interventions, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is developing a list of evidence-based practices at the three tiers defined in ESSA from which districts and schools can choose. Stakeholders in Minnesota indicated that in creating this list, MDE should also include, if available, evidence-based practices that demonstrated success in alternative learning center and credit recovery settings.</p> <p>Additionally, in the Differentiated Supports for High Schools and Schools Serving Primarily Credit Recovery and Dropout Recovery Students, the plan states “... MDE is differentiating comprehensive</p>

	<p>needs assessment processes and tools for high schools to reflect relevant secondary data (e.g., course offerings, credit accumulation, MEIRS [Minnesota Early Intervention and Response System]). This will include graduation data, college career readiness data, and other indicators of student success that MDE and districts have available.</p> <p>Minnesota is convening a stakeholder group representing alternative learning center and credit- and dropout recovery schools. This group’s purpose will be to provide recommendations for differentiated services, materials, and other supports for alternative learning centers and credit recovery schools identified for support and improvement.” (page 18 of Minnesota state plan)</p>
New Mexico	<p>“...the charter school community and PED [Public Education Department] have agreed that the criteria to become a SAM [Supplemental Accountability Model] school and the school grade modifications for such schools are incomplete. PED will convene a group of stakeholders that will produce recommendations for a new state regulation. This will provide more clarity for all interested stakeholders and provide a sustainable path forward.” (page 96 of New Mexico state plan)</p>
Ohio	<p>The Ohio Department of Education proposes strategies to provide successful transition of students from middle to high school, reduce dropouts, and improve graduation rates. One strategy includes the Alternative Education Challenge Grants, in which “Ohio will leverage the existing Alternative Education Challenge Grants to improve outcomes for at-risk students, including more aligned coordination with required school improvement plans.” (page 73). Focus areas for the grants include improvement in school climate and transition of students into and out of alternative programs. Another strategy addresses Dropout Recovery Schools, stating that “Using recommendations from the State Superintendent’s Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Committee, Ohio is working to develop a specifically-designed, evidence-based improvement protocol for Ohio dropout recovery charter schools...identified for comprehensive or targeted support.” To learn more about these strategies, reference page 73 of Ohio state plan.</p>
Washington	<p>As mentioned in Figure 4, the State of Washington’s Office of Public Instruction, in partnership with the State Board of Education, is considering whether there should be an alternate accountability framework for some school types.</p>

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